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West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
November 2006

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Plots in Taylor County and Mineral County were evaluated in June, 2006 and again in September for percent composition, vigor, and forage production.

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[How Farmers are Helping the Chesapeake Bay](#)



Rod Bain, USDA Radio reporter, visited the Eastern Panhandle and interviewed WV farmers and NRCS employees. The topic was what they are doing to help the Chesapeake Bay.

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All field offices now have Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment and personnel are trained to use it. Herb Andrick and Susan Davis completed four training sessions in Beckley, Mineral Wells, Morgantown, and Keyser.

[...More Info](#)

[Conservation Education](#)

The LANDCARE Office offers an "Educational Packet."

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Floating Above Lagoon Wastewater, Treating Troubled Waters, WV Rural Development Newsletter,

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[Flu Get Ready Campaign](#)

The campaign speaks directly to individuals, families, and communities and help fill gaps by telling people exactly what they need to prepare themselves.

[...More Info](#)

[Awards: West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation](#)



Many West Virginia NRCS employees have detailed to other states this past year. Don Gohmert, Louisiana State Conservationist, hosted a picnic lunch to thank our employees.

[...More Info](#)

[Earth Team](#)

Twenty-seven Earth Team Volunteers donated 5,268 hours to NRCS in West Virginia in FY2006.

Former employee Rhonda Blankenship returned to NRCS as an Earth Team Volunteer and brought six other volunteers with her. For a record third time, Kelly Alvis has been selected as the Individual Earth Team Volunteer of the year.

[...More Info](#)

[Civil Rights](#)

Hispanic Heritage and Current Special Emphasis Program Managers

[...More Info](#)

[Meet](#)




Ben Collier, new District Conservationist; and Xavier Montoya, Acting State Conservationist.

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[Upcoming Events](#)

The WV Master Calendar is now a shared calendar in Outlook for all employees to view. This calendar will be updated daily, weekly and/or monthly as the editors add information.

See WEST VIRGINIA BULLETIN NO: WV330-6-9 at  http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/archive_bulletins/fy-06/330-6-9-MasterCalendar.pdf (231 KB) for instructions to access the master calendar.

To submit news items for the February *News and Views*, please send an e-mail message to [Carol Lagodich](#)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment.

NRCS West Virginia State Office

75 High Street Room, 301, Morgantown, WV 26505

304-284-7540 | fax 304-284-4839

<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Ronald L Hilliard, West Virginia State Conservationist

NRCS field offices are located throughout West Virginia

Visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/> for addresses and phone numbers.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

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Message from Ron Hilliard

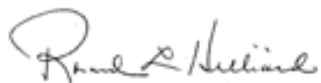
This letter is one of the most difficult I have ever written. I have been the State Conservationist in West Virginia since March 2005. I now will move on to Oklahoma as the new State Conservationist starting November 27.

I want to tell each of you how special West Virginia has been to me and my family. I have had the distinct honor to work with you the employees and partners to carry out the mission of NRCS: *Helping People, Help The Land*. This assignment has been one of the most rewarding in my career.

When I began my career in 1976, my goal was to be a State Conservationist. I have worked in five states and the Pacific Basin. All have been special and instrumental in me accomplishing my goal. You in West Virginia made it real, successful, and rewarding.

I compliment you on the conservation program in the State and the never ending partnership efforts that make the difference.

I leave you as State Conservationist but remain always as your friend...



Ronald L. Hilliard

State Conservationist

West Virginia



Wendy Noll and Roseanne Kennedy wear black arm bands.



The going away cake.



Ron and Edith arrive at the party.



The Lewisburg Service Center presented a city blanket.



The State Office and West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts present Ron with WV clocks.



West Virginia Conservation Agency Executive Director: Truman Wolfe, congratulates Ron and Edith.

Photographers: Charlotte Wertz and Peg Reese.

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WV NRCS Updates

After starting out \$3.2M in the red, West Virginia NRCS ended the year in the black. A combination of tactics lead to the fiscal success.

- Assistance from the SVSSC through cooperative agreements
- Reimbursable work at the PMC and for Soil Surveys
- Employee details to 7 states with EWP work (salary savings of between 5 and 7 staff years)
- Tighter fiscal constraints
- Retirements and transfers

WV was able to complete 100% or greater for all field performance measures despite the budget shortfall.

Conservation planning training for the NRCS employees who were previously granted Certified Conservation Planner status was completed. The training provided up to date guidance in the use of NRCS technology and assessment tools.

Farm Bill Programs**FY-2007**

- All programs are on a continuous sign-up.
- Funding must be obligated by June 1, 2007 for all programs
- Local Work Groups are holding or scheduling their meetings.
- End of ranking is December 1, 2006

FY-2006 Farm Bill Programs Accomplishments

Program	No. of Applications	No. Contracts
EQIP	1007	247
WHIP	211	87
CSP*	87	74
AMA	123	36
GRP	0	13
WRP	3	2
FRPP	27	8
Total	1458	467

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Increased our participation in CSP from 12 funded contracts in 2005 to 62 in 2006.

Soil Survey Update

The soil survey staff continues to make good progress in getting soil surveys in a digital format. This year they have completed the map preparation for Logan, Mingo, Lincoln, Wood, Wirt, Mercer, Summers, Barbour, and Jefferson. We will have all 55 WV counties to the Web Soil Survey by the end of next year.

The soil phosphorus survey continues. A watershed study in the Cacapon River area estimates the movement of phosphorus through the watershed.

NRCS is restructuring the soil survey program-- working on an MLRA basis from offices in Morgantown and Huntington. The MO-13 office in Morgantown will continue to have quality assurance responsibilities for seven offices in the region.

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From the Field

Mountain – Dominion Golf Tournament

On September 8, the states of Virginia and West Virginia were once again in conflict. This time it was not the Civil War, but the *Mountain – Dominion Golf Tournament*. This annual event is held somewhere near the states' borders and each state takes turns playing host. This year the Tournament was held at Glad Springs near Beckley as West Virginia hosted. About twenty golfers and colleagues enjoyed the camaraderie and the golf that helps us enjoy our relationship with our neighbors. Participants include NRCS employees, retirees, District Supervisors, friends, and family.

For the second year in a row West Virginia won the friendly competition. West Virginia now enjoys a one match advantage in this struggle for the "Old Pine Slab" that has been going on since 1999. Next year the match will be held in Virginia next fall. All West Virginia NRCS employees, anyone in the Conservation Partnership, friends and family are invited to attend and participate.

For more information contact [Greg Stone](#) at the [Beckley-South Area Office](#)

Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Area

Dry Hydrants for Woodland Protection

The US Forest Service has provided reimbursement of up to \$1000 towards the installation of dry hydrants for woodland protection. With most of southern WV being wooded, Mountain RC&D has taken advantage of this opportunity by taking 23 applications, and working with local field offices to install 10 sites. To date \$9084.00 has been earned by area landowners while providing 20,000 acres of protection for forestland.

Distributing almost One Million Dollars Worth of Donated Materials and Services

This year Mountain RC&D has received and distributed almost one million dollars worth of donated materials and services to people in need through out the Councils 12 county area. Project Sharing was lead by Board members Kaye Ballard of Fayette County and Donald Crookshanks of Greenbrier County.

Planning and Stream Protection on the Elk River Watershed

Going outside the box and taking a risk is just what Mountain RC&D did when it entered into Cooperative Agreements with Wolfpen Knob Development Corp. and NRCS to facilitate planning and stream protection on the Elk River Watershed. Under the agreement NRCS is developing conservation plans that identified stream protection practices, and Wolfpen Knob Development has agreed to install the practices as part of its mitigation plan. With great risk can come great rewards and ours will be the meaningful protection and improvement of 6 miles of stream in the Elk River Watershed and NRCS being reimbursed for it's planning expenses.

For more information contact [Mike Gasper](#) at the [Mountain RC&D Office](#).

Potomac Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Area

Newest ADT Kiosk in US – Grant Co., WV

The Potomac Headwaters RC&D recently completed the fifth of six information kiosks to be established along the route of the American Discovery Trail (ADT) that passes though the area. The ADT is a coast-to-coast trail that runs from Cape Henlopen State Park in Delaware to Point Reyes National Seashore at San Francisco, CA. The trail traverses 6,356 miles (including two alternate routes in the middle of the country, from Indiana to Nebraska). The ADT enters West Virginia at Green Springs, but follows along the border on the C&O Canal Tow Path starting at Harpers Ferry. It exits at Parkersburg.

This newest of the WV Kiosks is at Dolly Sods National Recreation Area in the Monongahela National Forest in Grant County. Marcie Beyersdorfer, Earth Team Volunteer / VISTA Person, is responsible for getting it built. Actually she and a willing

volunteer (her husband Jeff) built it this past summer. Funds, about \$500, was provided by the Potomac Headwaters RC&D. Marcie obtained permission, after some very long delays, from the US Forest Service to add on to their existing kiosk.

Previous to this summer, four other kiosks were built on or near the ADT at Green Springs (Hampshire Co.), Paw Paw (Morgan Co.), Greenland Gap (Grant Co.), and Fort Ashby (Mineral Co.). One more remains to be completed at Harpers Ferry National Historic Park (Jefferson Co.). The five completed kiosks cost about \$10,000 in cash and volunteer services. Funds and labor were provided by the RC&D Council and several partners (Green Springs Recreation Park - \$2,600 and Appalachian Forest Heritage Area - \$1,000). Each kiosk provides local information to the "through hiker" regarding emergency care and other services.

State-Wide Dry Hydrant Cost-Sharing at about Half-Way Mark

The Potomac Headwaters RC&D has paid out just over \$23,500 of cost-share funds for installation of 27 dry fire hydrants. There has been about a 150-percent match provided as in-kind services from land owners, fire departments, other volunteers, and USDA-NRCS technical assistance. The \$50,000-grant from the US Forest Service was awarded to the PH RC&D about two years ago, to be administered for the entire state. Certain counties have been rated as high priority, based on providing fire prevention opportunities in the forest-urban fringe. Cost-sharing on each installed dry hydrant is provided at 100% of actual cash outlay or up to \$1,000. For more information about the program contact Jennifer Boserman, VISTA Water Resources Specialist for the PH RC&D, at 1-304-267-8953 Ext 3321.

To date, 10 dry hydrants have been installed in the Mountain RC&D, 9 in the Potomac Headwaters RC&D, 4 in the Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D, 3 in Great Kanawha RC&D, and 1 in Little Kanawha RC&D. There are approximately \$26,500 of grant funds remaining with 24 applications being approved.

It needs to be emphasized that the NRCS technical assistance provided by field offices is what makes the dry hydrant installation project possible. Without it, each hydrant installed would cost 50-100 percent more.

Little Kanawha Resource Conservation and Development Area



Work Progresses on Trail Around North Bend Lake

The Little Kanawha RC&D is actively working on a 20-mile hiking, biking, and equestrian trail around North Bend Lake in Ritchie County. The trail showcases significant land forms, historic features, and scenic vistas. The RC&D has secured \$237,000 for the project through the West Virginia Department of Highways, Recreational Trails Program. The council has hired a work crew ranging from two to six workers. This crew is working by hand daily on the trail and has completed approximately five miles.

For more information, contact [Kurt Simon](#) at the [Little Kanawha RC&D Office](#).

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2006 Partnership Conference

The theme of the 2006 Partnership Conference was Water Wise.



Ron Hilliard (right) with Joe Manchin III, West Virginia's 34th Governor, and other partnership leaders.



Kurt Simon (right) announces a grant by Dell to provide computer printers.



Charles Delp, Assistant State Soil Scientist, studies the agenda.



The annual memorial service was lead by Rev. C. Gregory Stone.



Steve Carpenter (left) and Wendy Noll (right) set up for a general session presentation on the Web Soil Survey.



Ron Hilliard (left) introduced Steve Carpenter (right). Steve said the Web Soil Survey is *the most significant development in the Soil Survey since 1938*.



The Golden Auger Award recognizes outstanding commitment and unselfish contribution to the soil survey program and soil science in West Virginia over the current year. It is a joint award given by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists. The 2006 recipient of the Golden Auger is James "Skip" Bell (center). The award was presented by Steve Carpenter (left) and Mike Jones (right).



Peg Reese (second from right) presents the [Earth Team group award](#).



NRCS Retiree, Kelley Sponaugle (right) again coached the winning Envirothon team--the Shady Spring High School Biology Club.



Pat Bowen (right) was honored by the Soil and Water Conservation Society for his work with the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program.

The Law Farm in Lost Creek, WV took first place in the [2006 State Conservation Farm of the Year competition](#).

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Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) Grassland Project Plan Update 2006

Submitted by Ray Cragar

Plots in Taylor County and Mineral County were evaluated in June, 2006 and again in September for percent composition, vigor, and forage production.













The site in Mineral County had a heavy thatch build-up from last year's growth so the manager was advised in June to turn cattle in to graze and trample to remove some of the overstory. Positive results from this treatment were observed during the September evaluation; the stands seemed to have spread and covered the seven plots, resulting with the commercial varieties or experimental accessions of bermudagrass in each plot becoming the dominant species.

The Taylor County plots are struggling to survive, much less spread and be competitive. Cattle were turned in after the June evaluation to control some of the weeds. This treatment seemed to have a positive effect in that the overstory was reduced and sunlight was allowed to penetrate, thus giving what bermudagrass existed an opportunity to at least maintain its foothold.



The bottomland site in Mineral County is far-and-away the most promising; therefore, evaluation results from that site only are included in this report.

Grass	plot composition (estimate)	tons/acre (estimate)		
'Quickstand'	22.5%	1.3		

'Riata'	87.5%	1.6		
JE-III	95%	1.1		
KF-777	87.5%	1.1		
'KF-194'	95%	1.1		
'Wrangler'	92.5%	1.1		
KF-000	92.5%	1.2		

Only September results used here since this is based upon growth post-grazing, July through September – plot composition ascertained by visual estimation; production determined using a falling plate meter/pasture stick.

These results are inconclusive as to making a selection and/or recommendation of any particular variety/accession for MLRA 127, 147. So far stand development and production are promising but the real test will come after a dose of extremely cold, persistent winter weather.

For more information, contact [Ray Cragar](#), Grassland Specialist at the [Philippi-East Area Office](#).

Previous updates are at: http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/05feb_nv/grass.html and http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/06aug_nv/grass.html.

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How Farmers are Helping the Chesapeake Bay

Rod Bain, USDA Radio reporter, visited the Eastern Panhandle and interviewed WV farmers and NRCS employees. The topic was what they are doing to help the Chesapeake Bay. Hear the story at the link below.



NRCS in Jefferson County has completed more than 20 WHIP projects—Bob Schnably partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service providing cost-share assistance for agricultural and wildlife-related benefits. The first stop was at Cloverdale-Spring Meadow Farm in Charles Town, WV.

Chris Winslow, Rod Bain, and Warren Mickey discuss how the WHIP projects on Bull Skin Run are used as examples of a public-private partnership and cooperative conservation during NRCS training at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown.



Farm and Ranchland Protection (FRPP) was the subject at the Donnely Farm. Sam Donnely tells Chris Winslow and Rod Bain how FRPP provides a means for farmers to keep their land in farmland despite land use pressures from development. FRPP keeps land available for production and infuses cash into current operations. The landowner retains all other rights to the land.



Jim Michael has spent 50 years practicing farmland conservation. He uses nearly 20 conservation practices on his farms, including a 40 acre riparian buffer and a manure storage facility. Rebecca MacLeod listens while Jim describes his EQIP programs to Rod.



Gary Oates, Rebecca MacLeod, and Pam Yost, look at one of the 72 saplings planted along the banks of Sleepy Creek. The planting is part of a partnership streambank repair and erosion control project.



Steve Ritz and Hampshire County lead West Virginia in CREP participation. Becky Bowers describes how CREP is reducing sediment and nutrients from agricultural enterprises from running off into the Potomac and eventually the Chesapeake Bay watershed. CREP focus is on improving water quality and enhancing wildlife habitats through the installation of riparian buffers, filter strips, tree planting, establishing grasses, and restoring wetlands.



Doris Brackenrich answers Rod's questions about a new feedlot that replaced a Reeds Creek feeding area. The roofed confinement and waste storage areas complemented by the roof runoff system provided for minimal polluted runoff. Filter strips are established between the buildings and any nearby water courses.

Agriculture USA

[Audio from Tuesday, November 21, 2006](#) MP3 audio file (mp3)

CD#47.06 Program By Program Water Clean Up in West Virginia, 04:59 minutes, produced by Rod Bain.

A myriad of USDA and federal programs are cleaning up West Virginia, and in turn the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Rod Bain gets producer reaction in this edition of "Agriculture USA"

PARTICIPANTS: Rod Bain, Producers Sam Donnely, James Mowrey, Fred Mallow, Warren Mickey, and Jim Michael

http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/audio/features/mp3/OC-S-1623S-02-W_C2151CD8D50648FEBBC3483D3D4D88F2.mp3

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Bits and Pieces

DVD Recorder and VCR

The WV State Office now has a VCR/DVD recorder. It combines old and the new technology. DVDs have become the most preferred mode of storing data today.

Non-copy protected video material may be copied to a DVD format.

DVD disc's have the advantage over video cassettes

- Play on computers
- Take less shelf space
- Break or get stuck in the recording unit less often
- Have better visual and sound quality
- Are easier to mail
- Cost less than tapes
- Achive better

A typical write-once (DVD-R or DVD+R) disc should keep its contents safe for 100 years. A typical VHS recording can last as long as 20 years, but image and sound quality degradation becomes noticeable in as little as 5 years.

For more information, contact contact [Carol Lagodich](#) at 304-284-4826.

Inch of Soil Poster Updated

This recently-revised poster provides historical events that have occurred between 1507 and 2006 which is the time that it takes the earth to form one inch of soil. Please contact [Carol Lagodich](#) or go to the [Landcare](#) web site for copies.

Technical Support for the NIRS/NUTBAL Nutritional Management System

LANDCARE has a new publication available for you to order:

Technical Support for the NIRS/NUTBAL Nutritional Management System: it is FOR NRCS EMPLOYEE USE ONLY. This 21-page booklet was developed by Grazing Lands Technology Institute in October 1999, and focuses on decision support systems and the near infrared reflectance spectroscopy to provide information on nutritional management for free-ranging herbivores.

They are packaged 230 per box and the only restriction is that it is for NRCS Employee use only. To order copies please visit our website <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov>, call 1-888-LANDCARE, or email landcare@usda.gov

Farming for Pollinators

Pollinators are an important part of on-farm biodiversity. They help maintain diverse plant communities that provide food for wildlife and provide pollination for approximately 70 percent of crops worldwide.

Recent research has shown that stress on farmland and loss of habitat have seriously reduced the number of native bees which are necessary for the supplemental pollination of our crops. The conservation practices we recommend to producers also impact their habitat. NRCS, in cooperation with the Xcerces Society, has developed a publication entitled "Farming for Pollinators" to provide guidance on specific conservation practices for farmers and ranchers, Extension agents, NRCS conservationists, conservation districts, and others. A pdf version is available on the Internet at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ECS/database/technotes.html>.

Read more about how bees are helping farmers with their crops and how NRCS is helping farmers with their bees at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/thisweek/2006/101106/techtip101106.html>

It's About
YOU.



Fall is Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) time. The CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace giving campaign. Pledges made by federal employees during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations that provide service benefits throughout the world. This year's goal of \$4800 for Mon/Preston Counties NRCS employees was exceeded by \$366. Thanks to all who generously donated to their chosen charities.

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NRCS GPS

All field offices now have Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment and personnel are trained to use it. Herb Andrick and Susan Davis completed four training sessions in Beckley, Mineral Wells, Morgantown, and Keyser.

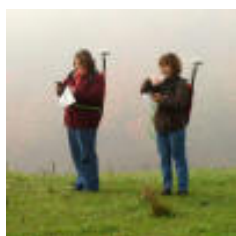
GPS is an easy, low-cost way to create an accurate map of a project. In the past, surveying transits, measuring tapes, and a multiple-person crew were required. Now many projects can be mapped by one person, while walking in the field with the landowner. Users can place field data in the correct location of the property—planned structures and conservation measures may be drawn to scale.

The course is three days. The first day is an introduction to GPS and an overview of the Garmin Map 76 GPS equipment. The second day includes classroom and field exercises using waypoints, tracks, and navigation using Arc Editor®, Map Source® and MN DNR software. On the last morning, the students use what they learned to navigate to a field location where they use the equipment to collect data on planned and existing conservation practices.



The hand held GPS receiver is connected to a backpack with a booster antenna. This antenna allows the GPS unit to receive stronger signals from the GPS satellites and more accurately record locations in places regular hand held units.

Photos are from the East Area session, September 26-28, 2006 at the National Guard Armory in Keyser.





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Conservation Education

The LANDCARE Office offers an "Educational Packet. The content of the packet has changes depending on what type of publications are available. The current packet contains the following items:

- *Why Is Water So Important?* fact sheet
- *Soil Factoids* fact sheet
- *Infiltration: Groundwater Flow Model II and Modification of the Bottle Hydrology Model* fact sheet
- *Apple Lesson* fact sheet
- *Conservation Trees* pamphlet which contains facts, puzzles, etc.
- *Invite a Toad to Dinner* Backyard Conservation tip sheet
- Instructions for making Soil Crayons
- *What on Earth Is Soil?* fact sheet
- *How a Tree Grows* fact sheet
- *Favored Food and Cover* Brochure
- *Water Cycle* Poster
- *An Invitation to a Healthy Schoolyard* Poster
- *An Invitation to a Healthy Neighborhood* Poster
- *An Invitation to a Healthy Yard* Poster
- *An Invitation to a Healthy Country Home* Poster
- *An Invitation to a Healthy Apartment* Poster
- *USDA for Kids* web link fact sheet
- *What is a Watershed?* Brochure
- *For the Good of the People* Brochure
- *Helping People Understand Soils - Tools for Educators* CD

Go to the Landcare publications website: <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov> and type the word *education* into the browser window. (One packet per caller)

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Useful Web Links

Floating Above Lagoon Wastewater

(Recommended by Robert Pate)

Lagoons are commonly used to store wastewater from confined-feeding operations for dairy and swine. The wastewater is generally applied to land as fertilizer. But if the waste is not applied properly, excess nitrogen and phosphorus from it may eventually contaminate drinking water, impair soil quality, and cause dead zones in surface waters.

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/aug06/lagoon0806.htm>

Floating Above Lagoon Wastewater was published in the [August 2006](#) issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine.

Treating Troubled Waters

Floods have been plaguing West Virginia since the mountains started rising. For McDowell County, located in the hollows of the southern part of the state, devastating, 100-year floods hit twice in a 10-month period. Recovering from these disasters led a coalition of state groups to take a hard look at their inadequate wastewater infrastructure and its potential for economic and environmental harm and to develop an onsite wastewater treatment plan. http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/nsfc/Articles/SFQ/SFQ_sp06/troubledwaters.pdf

Small Flows Quarterly is a magazine that features news, technical, and educational articles about a variety of small community wastewater issues, including treatment technologies, regulations, and finance. Included as an insert are peer-reviewed research journal articles. The latest issue of *Small Flows Quarterly* magazine now online

at http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/nsfc/nsfc_sfq.htm.

WV Rural Development Newsletter

Find out what Rural Development is doing. See the July and October *Almost Heaven WV Mountain State Rural Express*.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv/Almost%20Heaven%20WV%20Mountain%20State%20Rural%20Express%20July%202006.pdf>

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv/Almost%20Heaven%20WV%20Mountain%20State%20Rural%20Express%20October%202006.pdf>

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Flu Get Ready Campaign

The American Public Health Association (APHA) launched the Get Ready campaign to help the public prepare for a potential influenza pandemic and outbreaks of other emerging infectious diseases.

Unlike existing efforts to prepare the nation for a pandemic, APHA's campaign will speak directly to individuals, families, and communities and help fill gaps by telling people exactly what they need to prepare themselves. The campaign includes a blog, fact sheets and podcasts, accessible through the Get Ready Web site at <http://www.getreadyforflu.org>. With the increasing threat of a flu pandemic, the general public must be equipped with the necessary resources to protect themselves. Unlike many other efforts using technical language and lengthy articles, APHA's Get Ready campaign will provide straightforward information and tools that are crafted for and relevant to all Americans.

The Get Ready for Flu blog, at <http://www.getreadyforflu.blogspot.com/>, provides readers with background information on avian and pandemic influenza and practical advice on how to prepare themselves, their families, and their communities. The blog also provides a discussion forum that addresses emerging issues and allows visitors to share comments and knowledge with others. Current posts include information about the H5N1 strain, food safety, school preparedness, and prevention tips.

In addition to the blog, a new series of podcasts featuring public health experts discusses need for preparedness and the increasing threat of pandemic flu. Future podcasts will cover topics such as: pandemic flu basics; the impact of pandemic flu on certain communities; cooking procedures; and lessons learned from the Spanish flu from 1918 to 1919.

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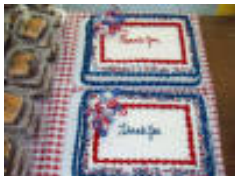
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Awards: West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation



Many West Virginia NRCS employees have detailed to other states this past year. Don Gohmert, Louisiana State Conservationist, hosted a picnic lunch to thank our employees.






Picnic honorees









Utah group





Louisiana group

Name	Home Unit	Location	Date	
Vickie Scott	Philippi-East Area Office	LA	February 13 30 days	
Mike Mullennex	Philippi Service Center	LA	February 13 30 days	
Larry Casseday	Elkins Service Center	LA	February 13 30 days	-
John Weller	Philippi-East Area Office	LA	February 13 30 days	
Matt Pyle	Petersburg Service Center	LA	February 13 30 days	

Patricia Mitchell	Cross Lanes Service Center	LA, UT	February 13 30 days February 2 30-60 days	
David Sweeney	Parkersburg - West Area Office	LA	February 13 30 days	
Donny Dodd, Jr.	Beckley - South Area Office	UT	March 6 30-60 days	-
Laura Davis	Beckley - South Area Office	UT	March 6 30-60 days	
Danny Miles	Beckley - South Area Office	UT	March 6 30-60 days	-
Jim Allen	Philippi - East Area Office	UT	March 6 30-60 days	
Cecil Springer	Philippi - East Area Office	UT	March 6 30-60 days	
Ray Hamilton	Philippi - East Area Office	UT	March 6 30-60 days	

Tom Tamasco	Morgantown State Office	UT	March 12 30-60 days	
Ernest Morgan	Philippi - East Area Office	UT	March 12 30-60 days	
Clay Handley	Beckley - South Area Office	UT	March 12 30-60 days	
Dan Lynch	Moorefield Service Center	UT	March 19 30-60 days	
Mike Allen	Petersburg Service Center	UT	March 19 30-60 days	
Brandon Duckworth	Hamlin Service Center	UT	March 19 30-60 days	
Ray Cragar	Philippi - East Area Office	UT	March 20 30-60 days	

Debra Delaney	Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D Office	UT	March 27 30-60 days days	
Crystle Buchanan	Parkersburg - West Area Office	UT	March 27 30-60 days days	

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Earth Team

Twenty-seven Earth Team Volunteers donated 5,268 hours to NRCS in West Virginia in FY2006. This is the equivalent of 2.5 staff years and is valued at \$95,035.00. This is 6 fewer volunteers, but 3,884 hours more than FY2005. Although FY2006 results are a big improvement over FY2005, we still have not matched past Earth Team successes. In FY2002, 188 volunteers contributed 10,722 hours for a total of 5.2 staff years.

I want to thank you for your support of the Earth Team. With your help we can recruit more volunteers to help with our mission this year.

Peg Reese

State Volunteer Coordinator

Earth Team Awards

Group Award



L-R: Conservation Club: Barbara Scarberry, Aid; Eric Davis; Curtis Atkinson; Dustin Robinson; and Rhonda Blankenship, Teacher.

Former employee Rhonda Blankenship returned to NRCS as an Earth Team Volunteer and brought six other volunteers with her. Blankenship is a special education instructor at the Mason County Career Center (MCCC). She is the sponsor of the MCCC Conservation Club, the recipient of the 2006 West Virginia Group Volunteer Award.

Blankenship's High School Students, Eric Davis and Dustin Robinson, started a recycling program for the Mason County USDA service center. Every week, the Conservation Club collects and shreds paper. The shredded paper is then hauled to the local animal shelter to be used for bedding. Non-paper items are taken to the recycling center. This

project enables students with disabilities to work in an office environment and enhance their social skills. Their efforts inspire everyone in the office to “reduce, reuse, and recycle.” District Conservationist, Valerie Hannon, reported that “service center employees have gained experience in working with people with a varying range of physical disabilities.”

Individual Award



For a record third time, Kelly Alvis has been selected as the Individual Earth Team Volunteer of the year. Alvis is well-known for his dedication to conservation and has been a valued team member of the Princeton Service Center Staff for more than six years. Kelly’s work is written on the landscape of McDowell, Mercer and Summers Counties in the form of ponds, spring developments, pipelines and troughs. “Mr. Alvis has been a big help to the field office, and has allowed other staff members to concentrate on additional work or other projects,” said Bill Harris, District Conservationist. Kelly Alvis is the cousin of G. Len Alvis, SCT.

The volunteers will be nominated for national recognition. Congratulations, volunteers and thank you for your service to conservation.

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Civil Rights



Celebrate Hispanic Heritage!

Rex Gardner, Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager, celebrated Hispanic Heritage by informing State Office employees about the Mexico and it's culture. Below are a few of the many facts presented.

- Mexico is the third largest nation in Latin America (after Brazil and Argentina)
- Products which Mexico has given to the world: Avocado, beans, vanilla, cacao (chocolate), maize (corn), tomato, chili, tobacco, peanuts, turkey, squash, chewing gum, rubber.
- Most of Mexico has two seasons: wet (June-September) and dry (October-April). Generally low rainfall in interior and north. Abundant rainfall along east coast, in south, and in Yucatan Peninsula.
- Mexico faces significant environmental challenges affecting almost every section of the country. In 1985 the government classified almost 17 percent of all land as totally eroded, 31 percent in an accelerated state of erosion, and 38 percent demonstrating signs of incipient erosion.
- Soil destruction is particularly pronounced in the north and northwest, with more than 60 percent of land considered in a total or accelerated state of erosion.
- Today, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 41 million people in the United States are of Hispanic origin. That's about 14 percent of us!
- In contemporary usage, the word mestizo refers to anyone who has adopted Mexican Hispanic culture.
- A basic feature of the Hispanic/Latino American family is the extended family,

which plays a major role in each family member's life.

Current Special Emphasis Program Managers

Chair	Barbara Broxterman
Disabled Persons Program Manager	Marvin Kerr
Federal Womens SEPM	Carol Lagodich
Hispanic SEPM	Rex Garner
African American SEPM	Leonard Jackson
American Indian/ Native Alaskan SEPM	Mike Jones
Veterans Program Manager	Ray Crager
Member at Large - South	Leslie Sears
Member at Large - East	Ray Carr
Member at Large - SO	Bryan Lee
Member at Large - West	Corine Broomall
State Administrative Officer (SAO) - Advisor	Charlotte Wertz
Human Resource Officer - Advisor	Larry Sargent

What do they do?

Special Emphasis Program Managers are responsible for:

- Coordinating of diversity events
- Assessing under-representation of minorities, women, and providing input to affirmative employment plans
- Developing action items to eliminate barriers to employing and promoting women and minorities
- Identifying diversity awareness, understanding, and appreciation for differences in all people and how they influence day-to-day operations

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Meet



Xavier Montoya will serve as Acting State Conservationist of West Virginia, effective November 26, 2006

J. Xavier Montoya started his career with SCS as a co-op student in the Albuquerque Field Office in New Mexico. From there he continued as a co-op student in various locations throughout the state.

Xavier graduated with a degree in Range Science from New Mexico State University. He accepted his first full time permanent position with NRCS in Window Rock, AZ as the Rangeland Management Specialist for the Navajo Nation and Window Rock Field Office. From Window Rock, AZ he moved to Lordsburg, NM as the Rangeland Management Specialist for the field office there.

After a few years he was selected as District Conservationist for the field office in Douglas, AZ. Upon arrival there in late 1998, he was asked to accept collateral duty assignments to serve as the Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM) for Arizona, and he also served as the HEPM for the West Region.

In November of 2000 Xavier became the National HEPM for NRCS. He worked closely with all the NRCS HEPM's, and NRCS Management to help increase the representation of Hispanics and all minority groups in NRCS, and USDA.

In October of 2002 Xavier was asked to serve an extended detail as Resource Conservationist on the Technical Service Provider group, to help the group develop the rule, policy, and other related materials. A couple of his primary assignments on the

Technical Service Provider group were: development of Memorandums of Understanding for Recommending Organizations; and to be able to present and share information about, and related to, the Technical Service Provider process.

In March of 2004 Xavier accepted assignment to the Deputy State Conservationist position in Indiana, where he enjoys working with other NRCS staff and the Indiana Conservation Partnership to provide assistance to local land owners and land users in conserving natural resources on Indiana's working lands.

Xavier has been married for eight wonderful years to Anita and they have two daughters and a little boy. He is very dedicated to his family, loves spending time with them, and enjoys the outdoors.



Ben Collier, District Conservationist

I am now calling Parkersburg my new home as I have moved here from Flatwoods, WV. I'm a native of Barbour County where I grew up on a small-scale beef cattle farm that my grandfather had purchased in the 1960's. I attended West Virginia University where I majored in Agricultural and Environmental Education. While at WVU, I worked one summer with NRCS in Kingwood as a Nutrient Management Aid. I began my student training for NRCS after my junior year in college. I received my bachelor's degree in agriculture in May of 2003, and I immediately moved to Summersville, West Virginia, where I was a Soil Conservationist with NRCS. After working one year in Summersville, I transferred to the Gassaway field office and worked over two years there. I was then very fortunate to receive the District Conservationist job here in Parkersburg in August.

Currently, I am engaged to Kristen Carnahan of Washington, Pennsylvania, and our wedding will take place June 30th of 2007. My hobbies include hunting and fishing, and I would like to start raising some livestock again. I also enjoy working with a friend in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania that has a rodeo company producing bull riding shows all over the east coast.



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Personnel Updates

(as of November 6, 2006)

Name	Action	Location	Change
Alan Boone	Reassignment 10/01/2006	Hamlin FO	Huntington FO
Baker, Steve	Selection/ Reassignment 07/09/2006	MLRA-127 Central Soil Survey Project Office	Subset Project Leader
Broomall, Corine	Reassignment 11/26/2006	Point Pleasant FO	Huntington FO
Byars, Jackie	Transfer In 11/12/2006	Louisa, VA	RC&D Coordinator Cross Lanes
Collier, Ben	Selection/ Reassignment 08/20/2006	Gassaway FO	District Conservationist Parkersburg FO
Darlington, Jamey	Selection/ Reassignment 11/12/2006	Weston FO	Soil Conservationist Gassaway FO
Jardine, Judith	Transfer In 11/12/2006	Hamburg, AR	Soil Conservationist Point Pleasant FO
Jenkins, Tony	Transfer 05/28/2006	MLRA-127 South Soil Survey Project Office	to: Dover, ME
Kerns, Alan	Reassignment 09/03/2006	Petersburg FO	Elkins FO
Marks, Michael	Reassignment 10/01/2006	Huntington FO	Toolkit Coordinator Huntington

Moody, Nikki	Retirement 06/02/2006	State Office - Contracting	-
Ramezan, Kathryn	Reassignment 07/09/2006	State Office Resources Conservation	Morgantown FO
Sites, Roger	Retirement 09/02/2006	Petersburg FO	-
Teets, Sigrid	Resignation 05/08/2006	White Hall FO	-
Topalanchik, Alex	Retirement 09/30/2006	State Office – Soil Survey Staff	-
Van Lear, Athena	Resignation 07/07/2006	MLRA-127 Central Soil Survey Project Office - Philippi	-
Wynard "Wes" Morrow,	Retirement 10/27/2006	State Office Civil Engineer	-
Wilks, Lowell	Retirement 06/02/2006	Great Kanawha RC&D	-

Retirements

The following document requires [Adobe Acrobat](#).



Tim Prescott put together a [slide show](#) with photos from Alex's life and career (2723 KB)



Our Own Zorro
Wes Morrow, Water Resources Civil Engineer

http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/05nov_nv/meet_1105.html

West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation

Name	Home Unit	Location	Dates
Laura Davis	Beckley Service Center	LA	October 16 60 days
Donny Dodd, Jr.	Beckley-South Area Office	LA	October 16 30 days
Danny Miles	Beckley-South Area Office	LA	October 16 30 days
Clay Handley	Summersville Service Center	LA	October 16 30 days
Tom Tamasco	Morgantown State Office	LA	November 6 30 days

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